C 3815

A

LETTER

TO

George Keith.

Concerning his late Religious Differences with *William Penn* and his Party.

By a moderate Churchman.

SIR,

I Am sorry to hear of Strifes raised amongst Men about Religion, but I must indeed confess, by what I have read on both sides, about the difference betwixt your self and some others, that are Quakers, you do seem to me to have received hard measure from some of your former good Friends and Confidents. Yet if you can Vindicate the Honour of Gods truth in those weighty points (which I find you are engaged for) I think you shall do well to accept of moderate reparations from them for the Injuries they have done to your reputation. Tho I cannot say it is your duty, or is prudent, totally to neglect it. For our Estimation is an Instrument necessary to enable us to do good. Your voluntary owning of some oversights of your own, and offering a correction of them, hath raised my hopes of your sincerity. And I think you did well to use St. *Austin's* and other good examples to encourage your self to it, and to insinuate an excuse for such a singularity to an Age, when hardly any one does so, for want of self denial. And I believe most indifferent Men are of the same opinion with me in this. But in *Tho. Ellwoods* Nostrils, I find this smells of nothing but Pride and an Ambition, to rank your self among the worthy Antients, When yet he has the Vanity to set off that little peice of his own, with the Glorious Title [of truth defended]. As if truth was so destitute in this Age of able Friends, that it could need such defenders as he, or had such inconsiderable opposers, that he could be of any use for it's defence. Who writes at such a rate, as if really he did not understand the true requisites of a valid Argument, much less the just evidence of any point in Religion. For in his Book he hath subverted the Foundation of Christian Religion and knew not, what he was doing. So that this Man plainly Titles his Book by an *Antiphrasis*, and might as well have called it. The Learned discreet work of

Tho. Ellwood, as truth defended. But Sir, you need not fear that disinterested Men will behold your endeavours to rectify such mistakes, as you have observed in your own Books, with the squinting of this Mans Eyes, who hath thus impotently traduced your honest intentions. In your narrative of the proceedings at *Turners-Hall*, you seem to me beyond reasonable contradiction to have made good your charge of dangerous errours, exhibited formerly against some Quakers. Who have denied both the Divinity, and especially the Manhood of our Saviour, and the Resurrection. And their seeming confessions of these, seem to me rather Collusive then sincere, having observed that they make them always in expressions of studied ambiguity and exquisite obscurity. But when they deliver their sense freely about the light within, they clearly set it up above Jesus of *Nazareth*, making him but an underling to it. Take one example for a pattern of the rest (extracted out of *G. Whitehead* and *W. Pen* by *Tho. Ellwood.* Post-script to truth defended *p.* 167.) in *W. Pens* Christian Quaker, *p.* 104. 'We do confess, that tho the Eternal Power, 'Life and Light, which Inhabited that holy person which was Born at '*Nazareth*, was and is eminently and chiefly the Saviour (for there is no 'Saviour besides me, said God; *Hos.* 13. 4.) Yet it was instrumentally a 'Saviour, as prepared and chosen for the work, which Christ had then 'to do in it. Which was actually the salvation of some, and intentionally of the whole World. This passage I also find quoted in the Answer to *W. P's* Key, printed a year ago, and there remarked upon. But I would only observe, 1. That in it *W. Pen* and his Trusty Esq; *T. Elwood* are agreed (for making this Doctrine more passable) to contradict Two Evangelists and One Prophet. For whereas they agree, that Jesus was born at *Bethlehem*, these two infallibly do witness that he was born at *Nazareth.* That the Authority of the Scripture being abated, they might authoritatively teach, That there is, 1. *The* Saviour (that is Christ) and *A* Saviour. The one the Chief and Eminent Saviour, the other an Instrumental Saviour. The one the Eternal Light (and therefore must be the same with these *Quakers Light in the Conscience*) and the other the Holy Person, Jesus of *Nazareth.* And since *The Saviour* is Christ, and Jesus of *Nazareth* here asserted to be a Person, and no more but an Instrumental Saviour, as prepared for Christ's doing of his work; such a Person being the Instrument of the Saviour, is nothing else but the Servant of Christ. Therefore Jesus of *Nazareth*, the Instrumental Saviour, is really the Servant of Christ, but is not Christ himself. And tho the Scripture every where teaches, *that Jesus is the Christ*, and not the Servant of *Christ*, yet they will have the Light of the *Living Spirit* to contradict what they call the *Killing Letter.* For being before preferred above 2 or 3, it may with as much reason be preferred before all the holy Penmen of the Scripture. All *T. Elwood's* other Quotations are calculated for to agree with this Doctrine, and are punctually co-incident with it. Neither is it either expresly, or by consequence, any where disallowed in these mens Books. I mean in all that I have read, that are several. When therefore, Sir, you charge *W. Pen* with Antichristian Doctrine, and denying the Manhood

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The case betwixt you and your opposers, I conceive in short stands thus. Your ten Principles being represented to the yearly Meeting here as carnal (that is as contrary to the Spirit of Christianity) by some *Pensilvanians*, justify you against all your Adversaries both here and there. For those Principles being the very truth, if the yearly Meeting disowns them in favour of the *Pensilvanians*, they disown Christianity it self; for they are so necessary, that if they be not upheld, the whole Faith of Christ falls with them. Wherefore if this be the real case, your contentiousness (as they call it) is nothing but contending for the faith delivered to the Saints, for which we ought to contend, and resist (if occasion be) even unto Death, and to give way, no not for an hour, to all the Authority on Earth that gainsays it. But if they own the truth of your principles, since the *Pensilvanians* did complain to the Meeting, and accused before them the Carnality of your Principles. They hearing them (as Judges by reference) ought to have vindicated the confessed truth of God from so foul an aspersion, and commended you for your indefatigable labour and diligence in opposing so vile Heresies. But not having done this, but on the contrary having Excommunicated you, for your pertinacious resolute withstanding their Blaspheming Gods most sacred truth, have in Consequence, knowingly cut off themselves from all true Christians, and cast you out for being *obstinately* a Christian. If part of the Meeting did believe your Principles, part not, but yet did both sorts joyn together to obstruct and frustrate your indeavours to suppress the errors and clear the truth, lest otherwise they should disoblige great Numbers of Quakers already ingaged in those errors, and make or occasion a rupture; The Meeting then becomes nothing but a Politick Combination of wickedness, strengthening it self by betraying the truth, and oppressing the hearty Friends of it. If they alledge, they not knowing, whether your Principles were true or false, and therefore they could not justify them, or you in the defence of them, but onely consult for the Peace and Concord of the fraternity, it is plain however, yours being the very principles of the Doctrine of Christ, that such a plea of such ignorance does instantly devest them of all the Authority of a Church Meeting. For should all the Quakers in the World delegate Men of such professed ignorance, that could no more make them an Ecclesiastical Council, then the *Londoners* by an election, can make the Lord Majors Horse his Lordships successor in his office next year. Such Men must leave the chair of *Teachers*, and sit in the seat of Learners. Besides, such Ignorance offered in excuse for their not justifying your Principles, makes them guilty of temeariousness in condemning you, for your vigorous defending them. Put the case therefore how they please, if they Condemn not your Principles (as they cannot, if they be Christians) their sentence Condemns not you, but themselves. This I observe of the merits of

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